

# DISCOVER YOUR CHURCH

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Pre-reading packet and class notes



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# Introduction

Hi! Welcome to Discover Your Church. We're pleased that you have chosen to find out more about Centre Street Church (CSC). This course is the basic introduction to our church family. In order to keep the class time focused, the following materials are included in the pre-reading section of this packet for you to go through ahead of time.

**Please read (or view) all the materials in “Section 1 – Pre-Reading” before attending the class.** The class will cover the material in “Section 2 – Class Notes”.

Please bring this booklet with you to the class so that you can refer to questions you may have from the pre-reading section and the video message that covers some of the history of CSC. The video message was recorded a number of years ago when Dr. Henry Schorr, currently Pastor Emeritus at CSC, was our Senior Pastor. In March 2026 Kent Priebe became the Senior Pastor of CSC.

The Discover Your Church class material is an important part of the preparation for becoming a member of CSC. It is intended to help you know the history of CSC – what the significant events are in our church history that have shaped us, how we have had to depend on and experience God, and where we sense God leading us into the future together. We trust that you will pray about church membership seriously because we would love to have you strengthen your relationship with our church family in this way.

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# Section I – Pre-Reading

**DISCOVER YOUR CHURCH**



## Our Salvation

### I. HOW TO BECOME A PART OF GOD'S FOREVER FAMILY

Two Important and Rarely Asked Questions:

1. If you were to die tonight, do you believe you would go to live eternally with God in heaven?
2. If God were to ask you, "Why should I let you into heaven?", what would you say to Him?

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PAUSE: Reflect on these two questions and then record your answers above.

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The Bible teaches us how we can prepare for the next life. It reveals four basic truths we need to understand.

#### 1. God is Gracious

\*God has our best interest at heart in all things.

"Oh, that their hearts would be inclined to fear me and keep my commands always, so that it might go well with them and their children forever." (Deuteronomy 5:29)

\*God loves us.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

\*God wants us to have a full life!

"The thief [Satan] comes only to steal, kill and destroy. I have come that you may have LIFE and have it to the full." (John 10:10)

\*Jesus came to give us a life of peace!

"Peace comes to me when I have a deep settled confidence that all is well between God and me and if I were to die tonight, I would live forever with Him in heaven."

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\*Jesus came to give us a life of joy!

“Joy comes to me when I have a deep settled confidence that God is in control of the details of my life and has my best interest at heart in all things, even when circumstances in my life seem to convey the opposite message.”

\*Jesus came to give us a life of true fulfillment!

“True fulfillment comes to me when I have a deep settled confidence that if I love others the way God loves me, I will impact others for eternity and nothing will bring greater fulfillment in life than that!”

**Most people aren't experiencing the full life because:**

### **2. Man Has a Problem**

\*We desire to be our own boss.

\*We tend to ignore God's principles for living.

\*The Bible calls this attitude ‘sin.’

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23)

“All of us, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way.” (Isaiah 53:6)

\*Some people believe they do not have a sin problem at all.

“If we say that we never sin, we are only fooling ourselves and refuse to accept the truth.” (I John 1:8)

“The wages [cost] of sin is death.” (Romans 6:23)

This refers to two things:

- a) Physical Death (we will all die one day)
- b) Spiritual Death (separation from God)

**\*Only God can fill that void within, which brings us to:**

### **3. God's Solution**

“But God demonstrates His own love for us in this while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8)

“For it is by grace you have been saved through faith, this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9)

“The life is in the blood.” (Leviticus 17:11)

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“He ordained that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.”  
(Hebrews 9:22)

Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6)

### 4. I Must Respond

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Review how you responded to the two questions at the beginning of this session.

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#### How Can You Receive Eternal Life?

1. Admit that God has not had first place in your life, that you are a sinner and ask Him to forgive your sins.

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)

2. Believe that Jesus died to pay for your sins, that He rose again and is alive and as real as the person sitting next to you.

“If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord’ and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” (Romans 10:9)

3. Receive God's free gift of salvation by faith. Jump into the free net of grace He provides. Don't try to earn it through your own effort.

“Yet to all who received Him to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.” (John 1:12)

\*To receive Jesus is to make a conscious decision to put your life totally into His hands. It is to trust Him not only for eternal life but also the full life He offers you in this life.

\*You can invite Christ into your life through a prayer of commitment if you:

- Admit you are a sinner.
- That Christ is a reality.
- That He died for our sins.
- That you want to be forgiven of your sins and regrets.
- That you want to spend forever with the Lord in heaven when you die.
- That you want to live your life on earth full of God's peace, joy and fulfillment

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You can pray this prayer right now:

Heavenly Father, I thank you for creating me and loving me, even when I've ignored you and gone my own way. I realize I need you in my life and I'm so sorry for my sins. I ask that you forgive me of my pride, self-reliance and sinful thoughts and acts. Thank you for your love and grace and reminding me that my relationship with you is not restored by anything I have done or can do but on the basis of what you have already done for me through your son Jesus on the cross. Please come into my life now and cleanse me from my sin and make me a new person inside and out. I accept your gift of salvation and commit myself to following you as Lord. Please help me to grow now as a Christian and become all you want me to be through the fellowship and support of your church. I pray this in Jesus name. Amen.

2 Corinthians 5:17 says that you are a new creation - the old has gone, the new has come.

I John 5:11 & 12 says, "And this is the testimony - God HAS given us eternal life and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son (which you now have by faith), HAS LIFE (eternal life). He who has not the Son, does not have life. I write these things to you who BELIEVE in the name of the Son of God so that you may KNOW you have eternal life."

In closing:

1. Make sure you tell someone.
2. Get Involved.

## II. YOUR GROWTH IN CHRIST:

### A. THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING BAPTIZED

#### 1. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF BAPTISM?

Believer's Baptism is a step of OBEDIENCE for the believer. Through baptism, he or she is saying to the Lord and to the world, "I'm a disciple of Jesus Christ. I intend to follow my Lord in obedience and faithfulness."

- a. It illustrates Christ's **BURIAL** and **RESURRECTION**.

"Christ died for our sins...He was buried...and He rose again." (I Corinthians 15: 3-4)

"For when you were baptized, you were buried with Christ, and in baptism you were raised with Christ." (Colossians 2:12)

- b. It illustrates my new **LIFE** as a Christian.

"When someone becomes a Christian he becomes a brand new person inside. The old life has passed away and a new life has begun." (2 Corinthians 5:17)

“He saved us not because of righteous things we had done but because of His mercy.”  
(Titus 3:5)

## **2. WHY SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?**

- a. To follow the **EXAMPLE** set by Jesus Christ.

“At that time Jesus came from Nazareth and was baptized by John in the river.”  
(Mark 1:9)

- b. Because Jesus **COMMANDS** It.

Jesus said, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

In baptism, we are openly expressing that we have repented from sin, our faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior and our deep desire to follow Him as Lord.

## **3. WHY BE BAPTIZED BY IMMERSION?**

- a. Because Jesus was baptized that way.

As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of the water.”

- b. The word ‘Baptize’ means to “dip under” water.
- c. It best symbolizes a burial and resurrection.

## **4. WHEN SHOULD YOU BE BAPTIZED?**

As soon as you have believed in Christ.

“Those who accepted his message were baptized...that day.” (Acts 2:41)

## **5. CAN MY FAMILY BE BAPTIZED TOGETHER?**

- a. If the family member understands the meaning of Baptism
- b. If each family member has personally placed his/her trust in Christ for salvation

## **6. IF I WANT TO BE BAPTIZED WHAT IS THE NEXT STEP?**

Pick up a “Meaning of Baptism” booklet (self-study class on baptism) and a Baptism Application from the Connect Centre at your campus or from the church website, or talk to a church leader and let them know that you want to get baptized.

## B. THE MEANING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER (I Corinthians 11:17-34)

1. The **PERVERSION**: (v. 17-22)

2. The **PURPOSE**: (v. 23-26).

a. **Look Back** for the purpose of remembering and giving thanks.

- i. Remember **that** Christ died.
- ii. Remember **why** Christ died.
- iii. Remember **how** Christ.

b. **Look Ahead** to rejoice for the time when He the Lord will return once again.

\*“For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.” (v.26)

\*“We shall see Him and be like Him.” (I John 3:2)

3. The **PREPARATION**: (v. 27-32)

a. **Look Within** asking the Lord to examine your heart.

b. **Look Around** giving thanks for the members of the body of Christ and ensuring you are at peace with everyone.

**Therefore the Lord's Supper:**

- serves to create unity between people
- demonstrates purity within people

## Our Beliefs

### I. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. In essential beliefs, we have Unity (Ephesians 4:4-6)
2. In non-essential beliefs, we have Liberty (Romans 14:4, 12, 22)
3. In all our beliefs, we show Charity (I Corinthians 13:2)

### II. STATEMENT OF FAITH

#### 1. ABOUT GOD

We believe in the one true, living and holy God, who alone is the Creator, Sustainer and Ruler of all things visible and invisible. God exists eternally as a trinity of three persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They are distinct but inseparable, eternally one in essence and power.

Genesis 1:1-2; Isaiah 44:6-8; John 1:1-3,14; I Corinthians 2:9-12; Colossians 1:15-16, 2:9; Hebrews 1:3

#### **Some Practical Applications:**

\*Knowing God is our highest priority.

\*God wants to have a relationship with us and see us grow in our faith throughout our lifetime.

#### 2. ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

We believe in Jesus Christ, who is truly God and truly man and in whom the divine and human natures are inseparably united. He is the eternal Son of God who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary as Jesus of Nazareth. He came to reveal God to people and announce the coming of God's Kingdom. Having lived a sinless life of perfect obedience to the Father, He died on the cross to pay the penalty for each person's sin, rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. In doing so, He provided the only way for people to be rescued from sin and to experience forgiveness and fullness of life, both now and for eternity. He is the only Mediator between God and people.

Matthew 1:18-25, 4:17, 23; Luke 23-24; John 1:1-18, 6:37-47, 10:10; John 14:6; I Corinthians 15:3-8; Hebrews 4:14-15, 9:14-15; Ephesians 4:11-16

**Some Practical Applications:**

\*Any message that does not centre on Jesus Christ, including His full humanity and divinity as well as His forgiveness for all sin, is not the Gospel.

\*Because our salvation was secured by a perfect sacrifice of a perfect person, we live knowing that we are totally and unconditionally forgiven from sin now, rather than hoping we will be forgiven at some future point; we are secure in the grace of God through Jesus Christ.

\* Knowing that Jesus will return some day, we hold on loosely to the things of this world, counting on the new heaven and earth to be our permanent home.

**3. ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT**

We believe in the Holy Spirit, who is fully God and one with the Father and the Son and who works in people to make them aware of their need for freedom from sin and a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit enters and lives in every person who trusts and follows Jesus Christ. He makes them spiritually alive through Christ and gives them understanding of spiritual truth, guidance in doing what is right, and power to be the person God created them to be and to accomplish God's purposes for their lives. The Holy Spirit also gives all Christ-followers special abilities (spiritual gifts) to use for God's glory and the service of others.

John 3:5-8, 16:7-14; Romans 8:5-17, 26-27; I Corinthians 2:10-12, 12:4-11; Ephesians 3:16-21; Galatians 5:22-25; Ephesians 6:10-18

**Some Practical Applications:**

\*As saved people, we are continually striving to be more like the One who saved us. We are not content just to be forgiven; we want to exemplify Christ-like behavior in every area of our lives.

\*The Christian life is more than just "being good", we need the Holy Spirit to bear His fruit in us. Therefore, we must daily yield our lives to the Holy Spirit in moment-by-moment surrender.

\*When we share Christ with others, we are aware that only God can change a heart, and therefore we depend on the Holy Spirit's activity through our limited understanding of what will reach the person.

\*Because the Holy Spirit is resident in us, we will listen for His promptings, anticipating that He wants to direct us and will do so if we are open to Him.

**4. ABOUT THE BIBLE**

We believe that the Bible, consisting of the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, is the authoritative Word of God. It was written by human authors under the inspiration and supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit and contains no error in all that it teaches. It is the supreme source of truth for Christian beliefs and teaches Christ-followers how to grow in relationship with God and others and live a holy and fulfilling life.

Psalms 119:105; Matthew 4:4; John 17:17; II Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12; II Peter 1:20-21

**Some Practical Applications:**

\*We endeavour to regularly read and study the Bible, privately and publicly, to understand its message.

\*We reject claims that any human or ecclesiastical intermediary is necessary for us to know and relate to God. We have His Word, and we are each individually responsible to learn what it says.

\*All aspects of our life and conduct must be submitted to what the Bible teaches about that area. We must obey what we discover God has commanded.

\*Messages given by pastors of our church must provide teaching supported by Scripture.

\*We do not accept doctrines, no matter what is claimed as their source, if they do not square with what the Bible says. Supposed 'modern prophets', 'new revelation', or any message, even if apparently given miraculously, must be tested by the Bible.

**5. ABOUT PEOPLE**

We believe that all people are created in the image of God, to be like Him in character, and are made for truthful and loving relationship with Him and one another. People are the pinnacle of God's earthly creation and the ones to whom He has given stewardship of all He has made. All people are marred by a sinful nature which is expressed as an attitude of self-centeredness and disobedience toward the will of God. Sin alienates people from God and one another and causes much destructiveness and pain in the world. Sin reveals people's desperate need for God. Without His intervention people are unable to become all that God originally created them to be. God loves all people and has made provision for their restoration and wholeness.

Genesis 1:27-30; Psalm 139:1-16, 23-24; Romans 1:18-21; 8:5-8; Ephesians 2:1-3; John 3:16

**6. ABOUT SALVATION**

We believe that God is merciful and freely extends His grace to all people. Through Christ's sacrificial death on the cross and resurrection to life, God has provided the way for people to be restored to a perfect relationship with Him. All people who respond to God's mercy and grace by repenting of their sins and self-centeredness, putting their faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior, and committing themselves to follow Him as their Lord receive complete forgiveness and are made spiritually alive through Christ. Although good works cannot remove anyone's sin, every person who experiences God's forgiveness will begin to live a God-pleasing life and do good works as evidence of their new life in Christ.

John 3:16-21; Acts 2:22-42; Romans 5:1-2, 6-11, 6:19-23; II Corinthians 5:14-6:2; Ephesians 2:8-10; James 2:14-26

## 7. ABOUT HOLY LIVING

We believe that God calls every follower of Christ to live a holy life in total dependence on Him and His power. This involves making a specific decision to respond to God's grace by fully surrendering one's life to Him, continually being filled with the Holy Spirit and fully dedicated to doing God's will, and learning to live in constant communication with Christ. As Christians confess their sins, receive forgiveness, trust in Christ and obey God's will, they will increasingly reflect the character of Jesus and receive His power for holy living and effective service.

Acts 1:8; Acts 2:1-21; Romans 8:1-4, 9-14, 12:1-2; Galatians 5:16-26; Ephesians 4:21-24; I Thessalonians 5:23-24

### **Some Practical Applications – about people, salvation and holy living:**

\*We live secure in the knowledge that the Christian life we live is a 'thank you' to God for the salvation He has fully and completely provided. We neither think our obedience 'enhances' His provision for us (as if we could add something to the death of Christ) nor treat His grace in a cavalier way (as an excuse to live sinfully).

\*Knowing we are all sinful, we will never naively assume we're immune to temptation or evil. Though confident of being rescued from the penalty of sin, we prudently conduct our lives mindful of sin's ongoing potential to misdirect and destroy us. We believe the Holy Spirit, who is living in us, will guide us in growing in spiritual strength and maturity, and our role is to listen, trust and obey as He leads us.

## 8. ABOUT THE CHURCH

We believe that the Church consists of all people who have put their trust in Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. Jesus created the Church to reflect His character and extend His heart and hands to a broken world. The Church gathers together in local communities to love and worship God in a spirit of unity, to help the spiritually lost enter into a relationship with Jesus, to encourage and equip one another to maturity in Christ, and to advance God's Kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy in the world.

Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 1:22-23, 2:19-22, 3:8-11, 14-21; 4:1-16; Colossians 1:18-23; Romans 14:17

### **Some Practical Applications:**

\*Every gathering of believers is a gathering of the church; every small group (or cell church) is in fact the church meeting in its smallest unit.

\*Small group leaders function as 'shepherds' of their 'flock'. All leaders are connected to one another through the small group/small church infrastructure, and ultimately, the pastors can provide watch care, through those leaders, for the entire church.

\*All believers must have opportunities to learn about and develop their spiritual gifts. We structure our ministries to implement this value so that everyone can participate in some aspect of the church based on the passion and giftedness God has given to them.

\*Disunity hurts the body of Christ and His cause. We guard our unity and diligently seek to honestly confront and work through differences in God-honouring ways that both respect the individual (made in God's image) and preserve the oneness in Christ we need to manifest.

## **9. ABOUT THE SACRAMENTS**

We believe that the sacraments of Baptism and Communion are pledges and symbols of God's selfless love for us and of our commitment to following Jesus Christ. Baptism is an expression of having turned from our selfish nature to live a new life in Christ. Communion is a symbol of Christ's love and provision for us through His sacrificial death. These sacraments are reminders of Jesus' love and grace, His presence with us, His unity that binds us together and His promise to return and take us to be with Him forever.

Baptism - Matthew 3:13-17, 28:19-20; Acts 2:38-42; Romans 6:1-7

Lord's Supper - Luke 22:14-20; I Corinthians 11:23-26

## **10. ABOUT ETERNITY**

We believe that people were created by God to live forever and will be bodily resurrected after death. Those who have followed Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord will live eternally with God in heaven, while those who have not put their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord will spend eternity in hell, separated from God's presence. At a time of God's choosing, Jesus Christ will return to earth in great power and splendor. He will come as the perfect Judge who knows every person's heart and rewards each person according to how they lived their life. He will create a new heaven and earth, and with His followers, establish the full reign of God's Kingdom for all eternity.

Matthew 25:31-46; John 14:1-4; Acts 1:9-10; I Corinthians 15:50-57; I Thessalonians 4:13-17; Revelation 20:11-15, 21:1-22:5

### **Some Practical Applications:**

\*We reject the teaching of reincarnation. We must make good choices with the one life we have and urge others not to count on some later incarnation to work out their problems.

\*Knowing that our eternity is infinitely longer and more significant than our 70 or so years on earth, we order our lives here so that they take into account this eternal perspective. We choose our activities and priorities based on God's pleasure and wisdom; God's perspective and approval supersedes every other consideration and is always in our best interest.

\*The message of the Gospel brings life to those who would perish eternally without Christ. We therefore seek to 'love others to Jesus' in a sensitive, caring and God-directed way.

\*As we relate to people throughout life, we see them as the 'eternal beings' that they are and accord them due respect. We have never related to an 'average person'; everyone matters to God and deserves to be treated lovingly.

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## Our Directional Statements

The following information reflects the direction we believe God is calling our church to go. We are passionate about these statements and are careful to guard against being distracted from them. These statements have been developed through a process of careful thinking, analysis and focused prayer.

### I. COMMITMENT TO PRAYER

A strong prayer base is the essential element to the achievement of our Directional Statements.

We envision a church where prayer is held up as the highest calling of the Christian, not just in our services but in the very life of the church.

Prayer is the key to developing leaders of the Kingdom. God changes hearts, inspires hearts and raises up leaders/workers for His kingdom work in response to our prayers. Jesus said, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.” (Matthew 9:37)

The Lord also opens people's eyes and hearts to the good news in response to prayer.

We envision a church where prayer is central to everything that happens, where individuals and small groups of people are praying for each other, for their neighbours, communities, schools, local, provincial and federal politicians, the police force, etc., letting them know they are being prayed for and believing God to open their hearts to the truth.

### II. DIRECTIONAL STATEMENTS

#### A. Core values (what we believe is most important)

*The following core value statements define our distinctiveness as a congregation and unify our efforts as a body of believers.*

We value **people** because people matter to God and need to know Him.

We value *the corporate worship experience* as being vital to the celebration of God's presence among us.

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We value *scriptural preaching and teaching* communicated with grace toward the transformation of lives.

We value the *practice of prayer*.

We value *community groups and missional communities* as being strategic to the building of a Biblically functioning community.

We value the *unity of loving relationships* permeating every aspect of church life.

We value a *discipling process*, which moves people to become fully mature followers of Christ.

We value the *empowerment of people* to do the work of ministry with a servant heart according to their giftedness.

We value *servant-leadership* given by Spirit-filled people.

We value *giving our best to God* because this honours God and inspires people.

### **B. Biblical purpose** (what God calls the church to be and do)

The Biblical purpose for the church is to glorify God through exalting Him, edifying one another and equipping believers for effective ministry and outreach.

### **C. Vision** (what we're becoming)

Our vision is to be a Biblically functioning community of fully devoted followers of Christ committed to accomplishing God's redemptive purpose in the world.

### **D. Mission** (what we're doing to achieve our vision)

Centre Street Church exists to introduce people to Jesus and to help them become fully devoted followers of Jesus.

### **E. Seven-step strategy**

A strategy is the way we believe God is leading our church to reach our mission. Specifically, think about Bob your next-door neighbor. How will you reach him for Christ, establish him in the faith and equip him to one-day reach out in love to his neighbor Sam? Our church is committed to the following strategy:

#### **STEP ONE: WE CARE**

We believe the key to reaching our lost world is found in developing relationships with those not yet part of the 'forever family of God'. People will not care how much we know until they know how much we care. (And so we care for Bob).

**STEP TWO: WE SHARE**

We believe the greatest expression of caring is 'sharing' the good news of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we are committed to providing regular evangelism training courses--thus preparing people to give an answer for the hope they have within. (And so at the appropriate time, we share with Bob our love for Jesus).

**STEP THREE: WE BUILD BRIDGES**

Many people in our world distrust the church or see the church as irrelevant. Consequently, we believe we must seek to find ways to 'bridge the gap'--so that people can trust and identify with the church as being relevant to their lives. We do this by connecting with people's family and friends, and inviting them to connect with ours – perhaps inviting them into our community group or missional community or a neighbourhood outreach event, or sharing Christian resources that might be helpful to them, or inviting them to an outreach event or activity at the church building (concert, class, seminar, etc.). (And so we invite Bob to connect with our Christian community in various ways – exposing him to the larger church body and the gospel).

**STEP FOUR: WE WORSHIP**

We believe that as the Lord blesses our efforts (in steps one to three above) people will come to know Christ as their personal Saviour and Lord. The next important step in their spiritual pilgrimage is to worship God, both corporately and privately. (And so we now encourage Bob to join us regularly for worship).

**STEP FIVE: WE SUPPORT**

We believe that a community group experience is vital to one's spiritual development. Community groups serve to provide encouragement, guidance, and accountability and therefore spiritual growth. We are committed to training leaders of community groups so that everyone can be in a small church. (And so we invite Bob to be a part of our community group and our lives).

**STEP SIX: WE DISCIPLE**

We believe every Christian need to find his or her place in the church and what it means to be a Christian in the world. Accordingly, we are committed to establishing people in the faith, assessing their spiritual gifts, abilities and talents, equipping them, and unleashing them to be all that God intends for them to be in the church and in the world (including home and foreign missions). (And so we involve Bob in discipleship – perhaps 1-1 with someone in his community group, or in a small discipleship group setting where he can be discipled and learn how to disciple others).

**STEP SEVEN: WE MINISTER**

We believe a Christian is saved to serve and not to sit. We are committed to challenging everyone with the Biblical command to be stewards of their time, talent and treasure to the glory of God. (And so we encourage Bob to begin praying for and “caring for” his neighbour, and the whole process starts over again at Step One).

**DISCOVER YOUR CHURCH**

## Why Membership Matters

### 1. The concept of membership is Biblical

Ephesians 2:19 says, “You are a member of God's very own family and you belong in God's household with every other Christian.” (Lawson Brown)

### 2. Christ established the church

Matthew 16:18: “I will build my church and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it.”

When you become a Christian two things take place:

1. Christ comes to live in you.  
“Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is IN you?” (I Corinthians 13:5)
2. You come to live in Christ.  
“We are all baptized by one Spirit into one body.” (I Corinthians 12:13)

The implication therefore is that being a true Christian means that you ARE part of His body, the church. If you reject the church, you are essentially rejecting Christ. He gives you no choice. Being an active member of the body of Christ, or the church, is an essential part of what it means to be a true follower of Christ.

“Now you are a part of the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.” (I Corinthians 12:27)

The Bible talks about being a member of Christ's body.

1. Positional membership.  
“The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we are all baptized by one Spirit into one body...” (I Corinthians 12:12 – 13)
2. Participating members of a local church.

There are over 50 instructions in the New Testament you cannot obey unless you belong to a specific local church fellowship, including instructions like: love one another, admonish one another, accept one another, honor one another, forgive one another, submit to each other, serve one another.

Following Christ includes belonging, not just believing.

## **I CORINTHIANS 5**

“What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside!” (I Corinthians 5:12-13)

Church membership is a statement of commitment. “I want it known that I'm in. I'm no longer a spectator-I'm a player. I'm getting out of the bleachers and into the action!”

As you contemplate church membership ask yourself, which church:

- 1) Best helps me meet God in worship
- 2) Best provides me with opportunities to minister in my giftedness
- 3) Has a vision that captivates my passion and inspires me to invest my time, talent and treasure in achieving its God-given faith goals.
- 4) Do I feel good about inviting others to attend [not in terms of entertainment-but in terms of really meeting God and hearing clearly from the Word of the Lord]?
- 5) Do I sense the love and care of God's people and do I have opportunity to be in community with others?

### **3. Membership is important to the leaders of the church as they seek to fulfil their God-given task of shepherding**

Hebrews 13:17 reads, “Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They will keep watch over you as men who need to give account.” I Peter 5:2 says, “Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care serving as overseers, not because you must, but because you are walking as God wants you to be...”

For church leaders it is important that we identify those who truly comprise the flock of Centre Street Church:

- 1) The core that can be counted on to build and sustain the ministries of the church.
- 2) Those whose care and spiritual growth they are responsible for.
- 3) Those who are asking to be held accountable.
- 4) Those who are in agreement with the church's vision, foundational and directional statements.
- 5) Those (who according to Galatians 6) should receive priority in the allocation of financial help.

### **4. Membership keeps us legal**

“For the Lord's sake, accept all authority, the king as head of state, and the officials he has appointed.” (I Peter 2:13)

## **FIVE THINGS UNITE US:**

1. Our Salvation (which is what God has done for us)
2. Our Statement of Faith (which is what we believe)
3. Our Directional Statements (which describes where we are going)
4. Our Structure (which describes how decisions are made)
5. Our Statement of Commitment (which describes our commitment as members to one another)

# Section 2 – Class Notes

**DISCOVER YOUR CHURCH**

## What is “church”?

### 1. Opening Question

Talk with 2-3 others and ask the question “What does ‘church’ mean to you?”. After a few minutes, share with the whole group what you heard from those you talked with.

### 2. Biblical Response

Here are just a couple passages regarding what the Bible says in response to this question:

- Ephesians 2:19-22
- I Peter 2:9-10

How do these verses describe the church?

How does this make you feel?

### 3. Summary

Based on this brief study, we can see that Centre Street Church is an organization, yes, but more importantly it is a community of people committed to one another and to following Christ together. Although we’re going to spend a fair bit of time looking at the organizational aspect of CSC in this class, we always need to remember that the organizational structure of our church is not the focus. It is the scaffolding, and therefore plays a very important role, but it is us, the people, who are the building itself that God is building, a place in which He wants to live by His Spirit.

The church is people who are growing in God’s love and truth, who are learning to love and serve one another and who are following Christ together and allowing Him to build us, shape us, empower us and lead us to be active in His Kingdom work in this world.

**DISCOVER YOUR CHURCH**

## Our History: The CSC Story

The video called “Three Eras” was recorded in August 2007 when Dr. Henry Schorr (Senior Pastor of CSC for 40 years) talked with the staff about the history of Centre Street Church in preparation for another ministry year. This is not intended to be an informational video alone, but a means of discovering how the hand of God has been at work in our church in the past and how He has shaped us to be the church we are today. You can take notes during the video or wait until the end when we will review the material together.

### Centre Street Church: Three Eras

1. The Era of \_\_\_\_\_ (1958-1985)

Centre Street Church followed three strategies in this era. The strategies are:

- a.) Build the \_\_\_\_\_ and they will come.
- b.) Engage in special \_\_\_\_\_ (revival) meetings.
- c.) Humble ourselves in \_\_\_\_\_.

2. The Era of \_\_\_\_\_ (1986-2006)

Centre Street Church sought to live by three values. Those values were:

- a.) Love for \_\_\_\_\_.
- b.) Love for \_\_\_\_\_.
- c.) Love for others \_\_\_\_\_ the church.

Our mission: To introduce people to Jesus and help them become fully devoted followers of Jesus.

### The 7 Step Strategy

In living out these values we adopted the 7 Step Strategy as a way of reaching people for Christ. The value and activity that is intended to start this strategy and pervade every step of it as well is that of prayer. We begin by praying that God would bring people into our lives with whom we can share grace and truth and the love of Christ. Then we prayerfully follow His lead as we go through the rest of the steps.

Note: See Section I – Pre-Reading for a more detailed explanation (pages 16-17).

Step 1 – We Care ... \_\_\_\_\_

Step 2 – We Share ... \_\_\_\_\_

Step 3 – We Build Bridges ... \_\_\_\_\_

Step 4 – We Worship ... \_\_\_\_\_

Step 5 – We Disciple ... \_\_\_\_\_

Step 6 – We Support ... \_\_\_\_\_

Step 7 – We Minister ... \_\_\_\_\_

3. The Era of \_\_\_\_\_ (2007-present)

This era is marked by Centre Street Church responding to the leading of the Holy Spirit as to where we are to invest our time, money and abilities as a church and as individuals. In this era it is the intent of our leadership that we will be increasingly generous as a church and as individuals.

## Our Identity and Calling

### OUR IDENTITY: Who are we as a church?

We want to build on the foundation that we discussed at the beginning of the class when we looked at what “church” is. Here are three biblical perspectives of what the church is:

- Church as a \_\_\_\_\_.

Original word for church in the Greek language is “ecclesia” which means:

Called \_\_\_\_\_ ones – Romans 12:1-2

Called \_\_\_\_\_ ones – many verses in the Bible

There are 50 “one another” directives in the New Testament, such as:  
love one another, pray for one another, forgive one another, etc.

Called \_\_\_\_\_ ones – Matthew 28:19-20

- Church as a \_\_\_\_\_ entity.
- Church as a \_\_\_\_\_ body.

Centre Street Church is a local church body that seeks to live as a biblical community with “Christ at the Centre” of who we are and all that we do. What does this mean?

#### 1. If Christ is at the centre then ...

- The \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ is emerging in you.
- Experiencing biblical \_\_\_\_\_ is vital to your health.
- The \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ is compelling.
- The \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ becomes your standard.

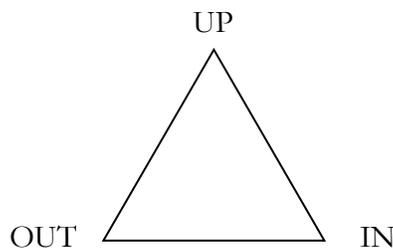
**2. If we are a biblical, Christ-centred community, then we will live a “Jesus-shaped life”**

In our desire to become like Jesus, we can clearly see three relational dimensions that His life revolved around. You could say that He had three great “loves”, and He was constantly attending to these loves which allowed Him to have unbelievably deep relationships.

Luke 6:12-19 is one example from Jesus’ life where all 3 of these relationships are expressed:

- UP – His relationship with God, His Father/Abba
- IN – His relationships with His disciples (the body/church)
- OUT – His relationships with the world (the lost and broken)

You could say an equilateral triangle represents the “shape” of Jesus’ life.



We are called to have the same three great “loves” as Jesus, and to continually pour into and develop all three dimensions in our lives – the UP, IN, and OUT relationships. Most people are naturally strong in developing one dimension, or maybe two, but typically find it difficult to develop all three.

We seek to live a Jesus-shaped life by regularly going to our Father (UP) and receiving all that He has for us, but especially our identity as loved children of God and our authority through His Spirit living in us. His love empowers us to live in community and love one another (IN) and to go out together and offer His love to others who don’t know Him yet (OUT). That’s the way Jesus lived in community with His disciples, and that’s the kind of life and community He wants for us.

**The biblical purpose** of Centre Street Church is “to glorify God through exalting Him, edifying one another and equipping believers for effective ministry and outreach”. Jesus’ three great “loves” are all reflected in this statement, and so our purpose is to grow in living a more Jesus-shaped life.

**Discussion**

Take a few minutes to discuss any questions that come up as a group.

**OUR CALLING: What is the vision, mission and strategy of our church?**

**The vision** of Centre Street Church is that “we will be a biblically functioning community of fully devoted followers of Christ committed to accomplishing God's redemptive purposes in the world”. This describes a picture of who we see Jesus shaping us to be – and the more we live in Him, receive from Him, and hear and obey His leading in our lives, the more we become this kind of biblical, Christ-centred community.

**The mission** of Centre Street Church is expressed in this declaration: “We exist to introduce people to Jesus and to help them become fully devoted followers of Christ”. This describes the work we believe Jesus has called us to do as a Christ-centred community.

The vision is the big picture of who we believe Jesus is shaping us to become (being), and the mission is the work that we believe Jesus has called us to do (doing) as we join Him in His amazing Kingdom work in the world.

This leads us to the strategic directional plans – the specific areas we sense God is leading us to focus on in order to accomplish the mission He has given us.

**Strategic Directional Plan**

We use strategic planning to keep us laser-focused on the mission that God has for us as a local church. The following are the give “pursuits” that we believe God is calling us to follow in order to become the church He wants us to be.

**#1: Pursue \_\_\_\_\_**

**We pursue intimacy with God, and as we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we grow in our ability to hear and obey God.**

1. We will move from the church taking responsibility for causing individual spiritual growth to happen to helping people take responsibility for their own growth through practicing spiritual habits.
2. We will move from the church carrying the responsibility for the ‘discipling’ of children to equipping parents to disciple their children.
3. We will move from measuring the spiritual health of our church by the number of people attending church to the number of people experiencing God in the community through the sharing of good news and the doing of good deeds.

**#2: Pursue \_\_\_\_\_**

**We pursue discipleship-making relationships to support, equip and challenge one another to live the way of Christ (the UP-IN-OUT Jesus-shaped life).**

## DISCOVER YOUR CHURCH

1. We will move from talking about small groups as a program of the church to talking about small groups as communities that create belonging, spiritual growth and mission.
2. We will move our groups from the idea that discipleship is something the church does collectively to calling individuals to personally disciple others, one at a time.
3. We will move from only building relationships with those inside the church to building more relationships with those outside the church.

### **#3: Pursue \_\_\_\_\_**

**As individuals and as a church, we seek to introduce people to Jesus.**

1. We will move from a classroom based approach to spiritual development to experiential learning pathways.
2. We will move from groups being formed on the basis of ‘study’ to groups being formed on the basis of opportunity to be ‘missional’.
3. We will move from celebrating the ministries of the church to celebrating the stories of people doing the work of ministry.

### **#4: Pursue \_\_\_\_\_**

**We pursue generosity locally, nationally, and internationally. We joyfully surrender our resource and demonstrate the love of Jesus.**

1. We will move from sporadically calling our people to give generously to regularly reminding our people to live a lifestyle of generosity.
2. We will move from being a church that increasingly needs more people resources internally to a church that increasingly releases people to serve outside the church.
3. We will steadily move from using our resources for ‘non-missional ministries’ to increasingly using more of our resources for externally focused causes in our community, our nation and our world.

### **#5: Pursue \_\_\_\_\_**

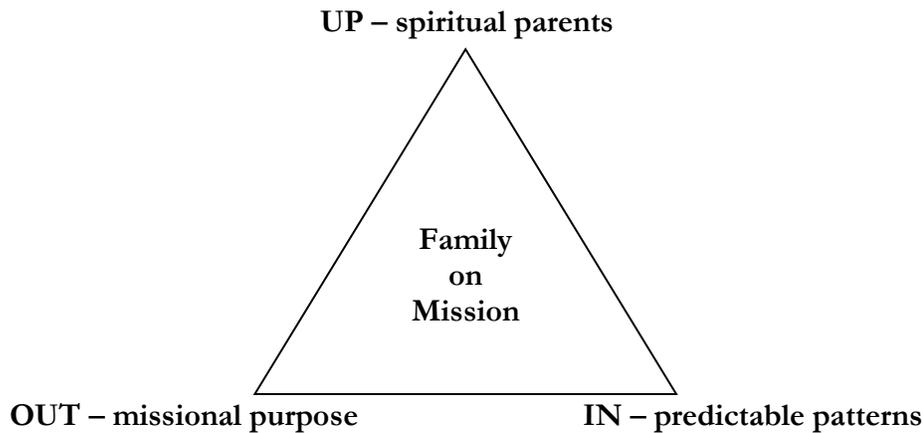
**We live simply to have the time to hear God and the resources to accomplish the vision and mission He has called us to.**

1. We will help our people to move from living life as the world calls us to live to helping our people live their lives with a Biblical worldview.
2. We will help our people move from living a more complicated spiritual life to one that is purposefully measured by growth in the five Guiding Principles.
3. We will move from being a ‘strategic planning’ church to being more of a church that follows God as He builds His church ‘organically’.

## DISCOVER YOUR CHURCH

Our pursuit of God, relationship and mission are reflected in living an UP-IN-OUT Jesus-shaped life. We want to pursue that in our personal, individual lives, but we also want to pursue that together with others in community. This is the way of Jesus with His disciples – He didn't operate as a solitary teacher but as the leader of a spiritual family that was on mission together.

In Luke 4:31-41, after Jesus was rejected by His biological extended family in Nazareth, He went to Capernaum and into Peter and Andrew's household. He changed their mission from fishing for fish to fishing for people (Luke 5:1-11). Jesus formed a spiritual family with His disciples and took them on mission with Him to share the good news with others, empowering them to become spiritual parents themselves – and these spiritual families continued to multiply for years after Jesus had left.



The Jesus-shaped life is meant to be lived in community – what we call a “missional community”. This is how Jesus invites us to live today: as a spiritual family that’s on mission together to people who don’t know Jesus yet, and to show and tell the good news of Jesus with them.

Question: How do you think God is calling you to actively engage with our calling: the vision, mission and strategy of CSC?

### **Discussion**

Take a few minutes to discuss any questions that come up as a group.

**DISCOVER YOUR CHURCH**

## Our Leadership and Structure

Centre Street Church is not an independent church. We belong to a denomination called the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada (EMCC). Our church is made up of people from a wide variety of church backgrounds and denominations. We love the fact that we can worship and grow and serve together at CSC, but we are also grateful for the accountability and support that we receive through being part of a group of churches in Canada called the EMCC.

### OUR LEADERSHIP: Who leads our church family?

CSC is staff-led and board-governed church. The Board of Governors are elected by the membership and appointed to a 4-year term of service, up to a maximum of 2 terms before they need to take a break. The Board of Governors works closely with our Senior Pastor – Pastor Kent Priebe – concerning the vision and direction of the church and the development of key policies to ensure we go in the right direction. The Senior Pastor and the Senior Leadership Team are responsible to implement the vision, mission and policies of CSC, and to oversee the people (both staff and lay leaders) who are working together towards achieving our strategic plans and goals.

#### Staff Organizational Chart

The best way to visualize what our paid staff team does at CSC is to look at the Staff Organizational Chart (see handout). This document only includes leadership positions that oversee other staff, and seeks to represent the main ministry teams that work together. While we do have a large staff, we rely on hundreds of people in the church stepping up to serve and lead – giving their time, talent and treasure so that many people of all ages can be encouraged and empowered as they follow Jesus.

Early in the Spring every ministry area develops a Strategic Ministry Plan that is prayer-based and fits in with our vision, mission and our five Pursuits. These are shared with the Board of Governors, and after some dialogue those strategic plans and a corresponding budget to support those plans is approved by the Board in late Spring so that implementation of the new plans and budget can begin as of July 1. Therefore, CSC operates on an annual year that runs from July 1 to June 30.

#### Accountability

The Staff are accountable to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) who work in collaboration with the larger Leadership Team (LT). The SLT is accountable to the Senior Pastor, the Senior Pastor to the Board of Governors, the Board of Governors to the Membership of CSC, and the Membership of CSC to the EMCC denominational leadership.

**OUR STRUCTURE: How are we structured as a church family?**

We are continuing to learn how to be “one church, many locations”. We currently have 5 campuses:

- Airdrie Campus – meets at 77 Gateway Dr NE, Airdrie (Airdrie Christian School)
- Bearspaw Campus – located at 33 Damkar Court, Rockyview County (the far northwest part of Calgary)
- Central Campus – located at 3900 – 2<sup>nd</sup> St NE (north central Calgary)
- Bridgeland Campus – located at 235 – 8A St NE (just northeast of downtown)
- Lakeview Campus – located 5336 Lakeview Dr SW (shallow southwest Calgary)

CSC exists in “many locations”. Each campus has their own Campus Pastor and at least one weekend worship service. Some campuses have ministries that are specific to just that campus, especially Central Campus (due to its much larger size). To find out more, go to [www.cschurch.ca](http://www.cschurch.ca) and choose a campus location in order to find out the specifics of each campus.

However, CSC is still “one church”. We have one Senior Pastor, one Board of Governors, one budget, and one staff team. Regardless of which campus you attend on a weekend, you will typically hear the same sermon and announcements, and the children and youth ministry teams follow the same format and material at all campuses. Our hope is that you will experience the same weekend service regardless of which campus you attend on a given weekend. And when a specific ministry is offered at one campus, it is almost always open to people from all campuses.

We are also a “city-sized” church. We are no longer a small boat, but a large ship, and that definitely impacts the way we experience and do ministry.

- Change is the norm.
- Crowd management is a constant.
- Calendars are relentless.
- Collisions happen.
- Calls to “change course” are regular.
- Our cause never changes.

We are constantly striving to become more efficient and effective as an organization so that we can become who God is calling us to be and accomplish the mission He has given us to do. This means paying constant attention to issues such as communication, accountability, resource-allocation, team health and development, leadership development and many other areas.

**Discussion**

Take a few minutes to discuss any questions that come up as a group.

## Becoming a Member of CSC

Some people feel they are members of CSC just because they attend weekend worship services, and perhaps give and serve in some way. However, since we have official charitable status as a non-profit organization in Canada, we are required by law to create a process whereby people can declare their commitment to CSC and become official members of the church. Taking this Discover Your Church class is the first step in that process.

**BECOMING A MEMBER: How do I become a member of Centre Street Church?**

### Beginning Your New Life In Christ (Discipleship)

Before becoming a member of a local church, it's important to make a commitment to following Jesus and expressing that commitment in baptism. Here are some steps we would encourage you to take before applying for membership at CSC.

#### 1. Salvation

If you have prayed to commit your life to Jesus Christ recently, we would love for you to let us know by calling the church office or filling out a Connect Form on the website or emailing the church at [info@cschurch.ca](mailto:info@cschurch.ca). We will have someone contact you to discuss ways you can grow in your relationship with Jesus and become a fully mature follower of Jesus Christ.

#### 2. Baptism

We would encourage you to be baptized as an expression of your faith in Jesus and in obedience to His command. If you have not yet been baptized, you can pick up a Baptism Application and a "Meaning of Baptism" study booklet from the Connect Centre or the website. Once you turn in the Baptism Application, a leader will be in touch with you to arrange for a discussion about baptism and plan for your baptism.

#### 3. Growing as a New Christian

If you are new in your faith, we would love to introduce you to some others who can walk alongside you as you discover what it means to follow Jesus in your daily life. There are several ministries at CSC that are designed for this purpose, such as Alpha, 1-1 Discipleship and Why Believe. To find out more, look on our website or contact the Missional Advancement team.

## **Membership Application Process**

At the end of this class you will be directed to fill out a Membership Application form located on our church website. Please read the documents referred to in the Application form, and be sure to sign the two pages at the back by checking off the appropriate boxes on the online form before you submit the form. When we receive the Membership Application from you, then we know you are requesting to become an official member of CSC. A pastor will contact you to arrange for a brief membership interview, and then the Board will discuss approval of new members at one of its next meetings. This process may take a while, but you will know that the membership process is finished when you receive your Membership Certificate in the mail.

Responses to two frequently asked questions:

- Baptism as a member of God's family is a pre-requisite to becoming a member of the local expression of God's family at Centre Street Church. You do not necessarily have to have been baptized at CSC.
- Everyone who wants to become a member must complete the Membership Application form, including those who want to transfer their membership to CSC from another church.

## **What is the commitment you are making when you become a member of CSC?**

1. You are committing to the vows contained in the Membership Covenant that you sign:
  - I will \_\_\_\_\_ the unity of my church.
  - I will \_\_\_\_\_ the responsibility of my church.
  - I will \_\_\_\_\_ the ministry of my church.
  - I will \_\_\_\_\_ the testimony of my church.
  - I will \_\_\_\_\_ to be a fully devoted follower of Christ.
2. You are stating your commitment to the church's Statement of Faith and Bylaws: Our Statement of Faith and Bylaws are quite similar to what other evangelical churches in Canada adhere to, but it is still important for all prospective members to read these documents and know what they say. To find out more, visit [www.cschurch.ca](http://www.cschurch.ca) and click "About Us", then "Purpose and Pursuits", and then "Statement of Faith" and the links to the Statement of Theological and Ministry Practices. You can find our Bylaws by going to "About Us", then "Board of Governors", and then "Operating Bylaws".

## **Discussion**

Take a few minutes to discuss any questions that come up as a group.

**NEXT STEPS: What is God saying to you, and what is He inviting you to do about it?**

Now that you know more about Centre Street Church and what it means to be a member here, how is God inviting you to respond?

1. To baptism and membership

Is it time to be baptized, if you haven't already been baptized as a follower of Jesus Christ? Is it time to join a local church and commit yourself to others in the body of Christ at Centre Street Church? What is still holding you back from one or both of these steps?

2. To relationship and spiritual growth

Is God leading you to join a community group, or a missional community? Does He want you to carve out more time to be intentional about developing a deeper spiritual friendship with one or two others? What is keeping you from pursuing God and relationship with others more?

3. To service and engaging in God's mission

Do you know what God's call on your life is, and how He has designed you to serve others? What is He calling you to next at this stage in your life – to let go of and stop doing, and to pick up and start doing?

Write down your thoughts here and perhaps turn it into a prayer of commitment. Take a minute to talk to God about it and determine what your response is going to be.

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Thank you for participating in this Discover Your Church class. Be sure you fill out an Evaluation sheet and turn it in before you leave the class.

If you have any questions about applying for membership or the status of your membership application, please email [membership@cchurch.ca](mailto:membership@cchurch.ca).